



*Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study  
in the Humanities and Social Sciences*

## **The History of Microfinance**

**Workshop Prof. Dr. Bas van Bavel and Dr. Oscar Gelderblom  
14-16 September 2011 @ Conference Building**

Dear Fellows,

Prof. Dr. van Bavel and Dr. Gelderblom will organise a workshop “the History of Microfinance” at NIAS as part of the Akademieassistenten program “De macht en onmacht van kredietmarkten” at Utrecht University.

Together with their MA students they would like to invite you to an interactive afternoon workshop on this subject on **Friday 16 September, from 13.30-15.00h**. You are all very welcome to attend this meeting in the Lecture Room.

### **About the initiative:**

The workshop The History of Microfinance aims to widen the debate about the microfinance promise by analyzing the extent to which finance did or did not alleviate the persistent poverty in Europe before the Industrial Revolution. Societies then had a long experience with the problem and they pioneered a wide range of remedies, from education via all kinds of well-endowed charities to poor houses and forced labor, all to no avail. Why was it so difficult to combat poverty in pre-industrial Europe? Was this because the poor lacked the financial instruments to overcome their low and irregular incomes? The research on the financial behavior of poor households and on the public efforts to reduce poverty in preindustrial Europe that will be presented at the workshop is designed to answer these questions and to draw comparisons with microfinance and poverty relief in the world today.

The workshop is organised by the coordinators of the Akademieassistenten program “De macht en onmacht van kredietmarkten” at Utrecht University. In this interdisciplinary program MA students of economic history, law, sociology, and public administration learn to conduct independent academic research under the supervision of experienced scholars from the faculties of the humanities and social sciences. The aim of the workshop is to allow our students to (1) present their research to a small group of specialists in the field; (2) to learn from the work on microfinance from these specialists; and (3) to organize an interactive afternoon workshop on the history of microfinance to the fellows of NIAS. The three days’ workshop at NIAS will help the students prepare their substantial contribution to a public event on the history of microfinance they will organize in October 2011 at Utrecht University.